

**Testimony On Behalf Of The  
Connecticut Regional Office of the  
Anti-Defamation League**

**IN OPPOSITION TO  
PORTIONS OF SB 840  
AN ACT CONCERNING THE ELIMINATION OF THE OFFICE  
OF CONSUMER COUNSEL, THE OFFICE OF THE HEALTHCARE  
ADVOCATE, THE OFFICE OF OMBUDSMAN FOR PROPERTY  
RIGHTS AND CERTAIN LEGISLATIVE COMMISSIONS**

**March 16, 2009**

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) was founded in 1913 with a mandate to fight the defamation of the Jewish people and secure justice and fair treatment for all. Today the ADL is one of the country's leading civil rights and human services organizations. The Connecticut Regional Office of ADL is based in Hamden and serves the entire state of Connecticut.

We submit this testimony today to express our opposition to the portions of SB 840 that would eliminate the African-American Affairs Commission, Commission on Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs, Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission, and Commission on Children, and in support of the maintenance of those Commissions as separate entities in Connecticut's state government.

The Commissions are an invaluable resource to the community and provide an important voice representing the interests of African-Americans, Latinos, women, Asian Pacific Americans and children in the state. Their role monitoring legislation, helping to develop significant policy and initiatives, providing information and conducting research, and holding government accountable is vital to serving the needs of their respective communities. Their existence as separate entities dedicated to this objective is of particular importance, since many of their constituents may not be in a position to retain private lobbyists or others to speak on their behalf, and they may otherwise have no presence or participation in the state's lawmaking process.

In ADL's efforts to fight hate, build hope and safeguard liberty, we work with the Commissions on a regular basis. The Commissions are key partners for ADL in our work monitoring and advocating on behalf of legislation relating to hate crimes, immigration, and discrimination. The Commission on Children is an important ally in our work providing anti-bias and diversity education programming to approximately 12,000 children in Connecticut each year, providing assistance, insight, and guidance in this vital area. Partners like the Commissions are essential to ADL's pursuit of justice and fair treatment for all in Connecticut, and to the well-being of African-American, Latino, female, and Asian Pacific American individuals, children, and others throughout the state.

We urge you to reject the portions of SB 840 that eliminate the African-American Affairs Commission, Commission on Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs, Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission and the Commission on Children, and to maintain their important presence as separate entities in Connecticut's state government.